

## Gur says Hamas dialogue possible

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel does not rule out negotiating with members of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Deputy Defence Minister Mordchai Gur said on Saturday. Asked on Israel Radio what Israel would do if Hamas members are chosen for the Palestinian self-rule council in future elections, Mr. Gur said: "We will talk to them. Years ago we said we would not negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) until it recognises Israel, refrains from terror and so on. In the end... they recognised Israel and made a commitment regarding terror." Hamas opposes the self-rule deal reached last year between Israel and the PLO. According to the agreement Palestinians were to hold elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli and Palestinian representatives are still negotiating terms of the election and the Israeli troop withdrawal which will precede the vote. Hamas has claimed responsibility for three October attacks that have claimed 25 victims. Despite the violence, some of Hamas' political leaders are moving towards participating in future Palestinian general elections and claiming a share of power.

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## 100 die in Algeria, FIS chiefs back in jail

TUNIS (R) — Algerian authorities have returned to prison the two leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) after a goodwill gesture of moving them to house arrest failed, the newspaper El Watan said on Saturday. The men, Abassi Madani, the FIS president, and his fiery deputy Ali Belhadj, were taken back to their cells in Blida military prison in a week in which Algeria's official and independent media reported 100 people slain in the country's escalating civil strife. El Watan, normally reliable on security issues, said: "The two men regained their cells... last Wednesday evening." Meanwhile, a French tourist was murdered in Algeria, the 21st French victim of political violence in the country, the French foreign ministry said. It named him in a statement as Jean-Francois Marquette and said he had been on a tourist trip. Radio and television said the 27-year-old Frenchman had been kidnapped by armed men on Friday and his body was found on Saturday in the town of Bouira, 130 kilometres east of Algiers. See earlier story on page 7.

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## Crown Prince returns

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan returned home on Saturday after visits to Germany, Morocco and the United Kingdom.

His Majesty King Hussein received the Crown Prince, who was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, upon his return.

The Crown Prince led the Jordanian delegation to the Oct. 30-Nov. 1 conference held in Casablanca, Morocco, on economic development of the Middle East and North Africa.

In a speech to the conference, attended by leaders and senior officials from more than 50 countries and 2,000 business executives from all over the world, the Crown Prince emphasised Jordan's commitment to a free market economy and enhancing the role of the private sector.

The Crown Prince also presented Jordan's vision of a Middle East in a state of peace and stability.

Amman will host a follow-up conference to the Casablanca summit in mid-1995 when many of the proposals submitted in the summit are expected to crystallise into real projects.

The Crown Prince, who flew to Germany before attending the Casablanca summit, paid a brief visit to the United Kingdom after attending the conference in the Moroccan city.

Also receiving the Crown Prince and Princess Sarvath upon their return home were Their Royal Highnesses Princess Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad and Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan.

Also present were Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, the King's advisors, the King's private secretary, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai, heads of the Public Security and General Intelligence departments, Royal Court officials and the ambassadors of the United Kingdom, Germany and Morocco in Jordan.

# Lower House begins debate of peace treaty

Majority support foregone conclusion, but opponents try to make their point

By Ayman Al Safadi  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Saturday began its debate of the peace treaty with Israel in a marathon session that is expected to end today with the endorsement of the treaty by the majority of lawmakers.

Twenty-seven out of 53 deputies who requested the floor addressed the House yesterday with the majority of them expressing support for the treaty and two parliamentary blocs announcing that they will vote for endorsing it.

Opponents of the treaty, however, also made their stand known during the session even though they admitted that they will not be able to block the ratification of the accord which is expected to pass with 55-59 votes in the 80-strong House.

The session started amidst strict security measures. Paramilitary troops were stationed on the major roads leading to Parliament. According to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, the government had received "information" which made these measures necessary.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House had recommended that the House endorse the treaty as the "best" accord the Kingdom could have reached in light of what is "possible and realistic."

The committee, which is headed by prominent centrist Deputy Abdul Karim Al Kabari and includes representatives of all parliamentary blocs, said the treaty allows Jordan to regain all its rights in land and water and falls in line with the basic principles upon which the Kingdom entered the peace talks with Israel in Madrid in 1991.

But three of the 23-member committee opposed its recommendation on the basis of what they termed as ideological and realistic considerations.

The three Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies, Hamzeh Mansour, Bassam Omoush and Mohammad Al Haj, also rejected the committee's assertion that the

treaty will lead to the return of all Jordanian rights.

"The treaty has ceded Arab and Islamic land... four fifths of the land of Palestine" because the peace talks were based on U.N. Security Council resolution 242 and 338, said Mr. Mansour, spokesman of the IAF's 17-member bloc.

Mr. Mansour said he also rejects the treaty because it recognises the right of Israel to exist in Palestine, it allows for diplomatic relations between the Kingdom and Israel, puts Jordan in a strategic alliance with the Jewish state and does not lead to the recovery of all the Kingdom's rights in water.

The Islamist deputy, whose speech was interrupted more than once by people in the galleries who hailed the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein, also blasted the treaty for calling for the elimination of any "aggressive and discriminatory" references in Jordanian and Israeli legislation, saying that this is a prelude for changing school curricula to rewrite the history of the struggle with Israel.

Though echoing the position of Mr. Mansour, IAF Deputy Omoush stressed that the IAF opposition to the treaty is predicated on its concern for the country and its future.

Referring to the history of the Islamic movement in Jordan, Dr. Omoush said the IAF will continue to defend the country with all its power because "we the Islamists never had a black page in this country."

"Now, and regrettably so, this treaty will receive the support of the majority which has to shoulder its responsibility before God and the people. It is democracy that allows all to speak their opinions," said Dr. Omoush.

But what the Islamists are calling for, he said, are not the principles of a limited party. They are calling for upholding the teachings of God and hence is the IAF call on other deputies to be "in harmony with themselves and reject the treaty."

Opposition deputies also charged that the treaty represents a deviation from coor-

dination with other Arab parties to the peace talks and weakens the position of those still negotiating with Israel.

Leftist deputy Mustafeh Shneikat said his opposition to the treaty does not stem from his rejection of the concept of peace but from the "failure" of the treaty to abide by the decisions of international legitimacy.

He accused the government of breaking its previously declared stand on the issue of refugees and displaced persons by agreeing to settle them in countries other than their homeland.

Harsh criticism of the government also came from Deputy Toujan Faisal who said the government was oppressing public freedoms. Ms. Faisal questioned the motivation of the deployment of security forces around Parliament, suggesting it resulted from lack of confidence.

Ms. Faisal said she "would use the margin of freedom" allowed to her as a deputy who has parliamentary immunity and speak against the treaty and "the lies the government is making."

She said this immunity was guaranteed by the Constitution and not by any other individual. Those who attempt to take away this immunity, she said, will themselves lose their immunity because they will be violating the Constitution that gave it to them.

Opponents of the accord also focused on a clause that allows Israelis to remain in Jordanian land under the "jurisdiction of Israeli law." They said this "concession" is a precedent that makes a mockery of the government's assertions that it has regained its sovereignty over all Jordanian land.

The Foreign Affairs Committee had responded to the opposition comments in its report, asserting that the Jordanian law will apply over these territories except in cases of disputes among Israelis who will be living in them.

The area in question, Baqura in the north of the country, consists of 6,000 dunums which belonged to Israelis since 1927, the report said. Five thousand dunums

were in Jordanian hands and 1,000 dunums were in nomads land. Under the agreement, Israel gives up its claim to the majority of this land but Israeli farmers will be allowed to continue utilising an area of 830 dunums for a renewable period of 25 years, the committee said in its report.

Proponents of the peace treaty sought to refute the opposition's arguments, asserting that the treaty is "a balanced accord" that serves the interest of the Kingdom and allows it to regain all its rights in land and water.

Announcing the endorsement of the treaty by the 12-member National Democratic Alliance, Deputy Ali Abul Ragheb said the treaty "was balanced to an acceptable degree, leads to the recovery of our rights and puts an end to the aggression of the other side."

"Out of mature patriotic motives and with national pride, I announce" the support of the coalition to the treaty, said Mr. Abul Ragheb.

Fan-Arabist Deputy Sameer Habashneh said Jordan did not break Arab coordination and has been the party that sought it most.

He said it was the Rabat Arab summit decision of 1974 that recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people and that made the occupied territories the responsibility of the PLO.

He said opposition was expecting Jordan to act as if it had all the resources of the Arab Nation and thus demanding from it more than it could realistically provide.

"Why wait?" Mr. Habashneh said in response to those who said that Jordan moved too quickly in signing the peace treaty with Israel.

"Why wait? Have we opted for peace because other Arabs are putting forward the option of war and we reject that? Are those Arabs who want us to wait worried because we will not be the last (to reach a peace treaty) when they wanted to use Jordan as a negotiating

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Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Deputy Prime Minister Thounan Hindawi have a chat during Saturday's session of the Lower House of Parliament (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)



Deputy Toujan Faisal consults her colleagues during Saturday's session of the Lower House of Parliament (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

## Lawmakers draw clear pro- and anti-treaty lines

In its first full debate of the Jordan-Israel treaty, the Lower House of Parliament yesterday listened to speeches by 27 deputies. Following is a report summarising those speeches

Abdul Hadi Majali (Karak), who spoke on behalf of the 16-member National Action Parliamentary Bloc, voiced support for the peace treaty with Israel and stressed that the treaty was a strictly Jordanian option.

This option was taken in order to safeguard the higher national interests and the treaty was a tool for Jordan to secure its usurped rights, Mr. Majali said.

"The Jordanian people were not in a position to delay the peace treaty further because delay means further sufferings and could lead nowhere," he added.

Mr. Majali explained that Jordan had offered an umbrella for the Palestinians enabling them to take part in the Madrid conference and later to take up their own course to reach agreements with Israel in Oslo. The Palestinian decision was taken freely and they are now on the way of regaining their rights, he added.

"At the same time we will continue to back the Palestinian endeavours. Now with the treaty ensuring our rights back and ending all threats posed to the Kingdom, we are in a stronger position to extend backing to the Palestinians," he said.

Coordination among Arab parties, Mr. Majali said, did not exist and Jordan had to opt for a way out of the difficult situation and rescue itself.

He questioned the reason behind those who felt angry over the treaty. Are they unhappy because "we have been rescued or because we

want our water rights back or because we have regained our occupied land and ended the siege on Jordan and breathed life in our economy?" he asked.

Defending the treaty as being part of an overall settlement, Mr. Majali said that by regaining "our rights in land and water resources we are regaining the rights of the whole Arab Nation."

If Jordan has now reached the end of the track, it hopes that the other parties will follow suit and attain their rights in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, he said.

Referring to those groups which express fear for the future, Mr. Majali said there was no fear that Arab culture would disintegrate. He said that all parties should join hands and face the coming stage.

He said Islam did not come to wage wars and threaten other people's lives but came with a mission to be spread around the world.

Criticising those who had always supported the regime and its policies for their rejection of the treaty, Mr. Majali said that the time has come for all citizens to join hands and work with "pure minds and clear conscience to serve the nation."

Ali Abul Ragheb (Amman)

Mr. Abul Ragheb, who spoke on behalf of the Democratic Bloc in Parliament, said: "Today is a day like no other, a day that will have a great significance in the history of Jordan and the whole region, a day in which we

face a dangerous turning point and therefore requires from us a high degree of vigilance and feeling of responsibility."

"The case before us today," said Mr. Abul Ragheb, "places us face to face with a major challenge in that we have a choice whether to remain dreaming and waiting for the unknown, giving no attention to regional and international developments or whether we become realistic and aspiring for a better future with all that it entails of hard work, planning and construction to ensure better life for our people."

"We view the peace treaty not as a panacea healing all ills; nor do we consider it to be fully satisfactory. But in my view it is balanced to a reasonable degree because it has secured the return of our lands and other rights and put an end to aggression and expansionist designs," Mr. Abul Ragheb said.

"We will continue to aspire to the day when genuine just and comprehensive peace will prevail in the whole region and we will pursue efforts to see an end to Israeli occupation of our land and the Palestinians regaining their independent state in Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital," he said. "We will continue to back all efforts aimed at the restoration of Palestinian refugees rights in their own homeland."

"In my view there can be no genuine peace unless it involves the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and ensures their full sovereign rights," he added.

"The present stage requires from people to pool

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## Cabinet panel to oversee assistance to victims of flood

AMMAN (J.T.) — In implementation of directives by His Majesty King Hussein to address the needs of victims of last week's flash-floods in Jordan, the Council of Ministers on Saturday set up a ministerial committee to supervise arrangements for assistance to the affected families.

The committee, which is chaired by Interior Minister Salameh Hamad, groups Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sqour, Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzak Ensour and Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan.

The committee was asked to report to the Council of ministers on progress of its work.

The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs has dispatched a team of officials and engineers to Mafraq region, one of the most severely hit by the storm to conduct a survey of damages there. The team will also visit Ramtha to the north.

A ministry official said the team would make a comprehensive study of the situation and make proposals for rehabilitation. The official said equipment would be sent to the affected

areas to help in reconstruction process.

In Zarqa, search continued for three people reported missing in the wake of the heavy rains and floods, which killed nine persons in the Zarqa region alone.

Official figures put the death toll from the floods at 21 killed. Al Dustour said Saturday that 24 people died, 34 were injured and 11 were missing.

Mr. Sqour chaired a meeting of heads of the departments of the Ministry of Social Development to review emergency assistance to victims of the floods.

Ministry sources said foodstuffs and financial aid will be distributed to the various families shortly.

In Madaba, local teams backed by the Civil Defence Department (CDD) and the municipal council were clearing culverts and rebuilding and clearing roads from earth and rocks.

Similar moves were reported in Karak and Tafleh regions which were also hit by the floods.

According to the department of meteorology, more scattered showers were expected Saturday evening and Sunday.



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday receives Nizar Abdul Qader Al Zaben (right), a youth who saved five people from drowning during the flashfloods that hit the Kingdom last week, in an audience attended by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad and the King's advisors Marwan Al Qasem (fourth from right) and Abdul Rasool Al Keilani (Petra photo)

## King honours youth who saved five from drowning

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday honoured Nizar Abdul Qader Al Zaben, a youth who saved the lives of five people from drowning during the storm last Thursday.

Receiving the youth at the Royal Court, King Hussein paid tribute to his courage and conferred on him the Jordanian Independence Medal of the

Fifth Order and presented him with the Al Hussein Golden decoration and a royal gift.

Speaking later to reporters, Nizar expressed delight at the honour and said that he would cherish the gift all his life.

Nizar said that he led a group of passengers on a bus that was heading for Amman from Zarqa to save the passengers of a

small car which sank in the floods near the Pepsi factory.

Later he administered first aid to the five people and helped carry them in a car to the civil defence centre in Marka, to a local health centre and the Queen Allia Hospital. He also offered assistance to the rescued people some of whom were suffering from injuries.

هكذا صنع البطل











## Violence rages in Somalia as U.N. sets departure date

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — As the United Nations set the departure date for its costly and controversial mission in Somalia, the violence that the world body tried to curb in the ravaged Horn of Africa country was the order of the day.

Inside the heavily fortified compound of the U.N. operation in Somalia in Mogadishu, workers rioted on Saturday to protest against the dismissal of 500 colleagues by the U.S. construction firm Brown Root.

It was not immediately known why Brown Root, hired by UNOSOM to build and repair roads, fired the Somalis.

Near the central town of Baidoa, once known as the "city of death" because of its legacy as a town where children died like flies at the peak of a famine in 1991, inter-clan fighting raged.

No reports of casualties reached Mogadishu but a spokesman for Indian soldiers stationed in the area said he feared fighting between clans there would spill into the volatile town.

With guns as common as eggs in the bazaars and war-torn roads, Mogadishu is a city of chaos. Life has long been a daily gamble for the citizens of the capital.

The daily shootings and frequent pitched battles between the clans have forced the withdrawal of most relief workers from Somalia, but their arrival en masse along with the U.N. troops in late 1992 did avert mass starvation threatened by drought.

That was the U.N. troops' primary mission, but they became sucked into the violence.

More than 100 U.N. soldiers have been killed over the past two years, and American troops who spearheaded the operation withdrew last March after 36 of their men were killed. They put a price on Gen. Aided's head, but never succeeded in capturing him.

The reduced U.N. presence in the country is meanwhile costing \$5.7 million a day, with the troops' main task now their own protection.

U.N. contingents have already pulled quietly out of a number of provincial cities. U.N. military spokesman Major Richard McDonald said in Mogadishu recently.

The two-to-four-month timetable for the withdrawal of the remaining troops, mostly from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Malaysia, means they will

start returning before the end of the year.

Leaders of 12 clans are currently holding a "national reconciliation conference" in Mogadishu but observers dismiss this as a farce, as none of their opponents is taking part in the discussions. U.N. officials had hoped the talks would be broad-based and lead to a government of national unity.

In Mogadishu, the United Nations tightened security on Saturday after a faction loyal to warlord Mohammed Farah Aided launched a savage verbal attack on a U.N. envoy for criticising its peace efforts.

Witnesses said the number of Pakistani troops visible in the streets of Mogadishu was high as UNOSOM attempted a show of force to discourage any possible attacks by militia loyal to the powerful Aided.

But Somali faction leaders said they planned no such attacks on the U.N.

Victor Ghebo, special representative of the U.N. secretary-general, has attacked the decision by General Aided's supporters to hold a reconciliation meeting in the absence of Gen. Aided's blood rival, Ali Mahdi Mohammed.

Gen. Aided's faction said on Friday that Mr. Ghebo was "usurping the prerogative of the Somali political leadership to decide for themselves on the destiny of their country."

"The special representatives pointed out that a conference without the participation of all the factions would be a recipe for continued strife and violence. He is simply wrong," the faction said.

At the U.N. in New York on Friday, the Security Council called for a secure and orderly withdrawal by March 31, 1995.

About 15,000 U.N. troops now remain out of a force which at one point grew to a strength of more than 29,000. They were first deployed in 1992 to rescue Somalis from the famine and chaos in which hundreds of thousands died and more than a million fled to neighbouring countries after the downfall of president Mohammad Siad Barre.

An orderly withdrawal for the U.N. force is by no means assured since Somali warlords who have repeatedly thwarted efforts to establish a transitional government may try to loot departing U.N. forces.

The secretary-general said the withdrawal would take between 60 and 120 days, depending on security conditions.

## Algerian troops kill bomber, 22 militants

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Security forces killed the man who orchestrated a cemetery bomb attack, which left four children dead, and 33 other armed Islamic militants in a raid in western Algeria, a newspaper report said Saturday.

The daily El Watan identified the man behind the bombing in Mostaganem in the southwest only as a doctor in his 40s. It said the raid was reported by the military commander in the region to a delegation of women who had gone there from the capital on Thursday.

There was no official confirmation of the report Saturday morning.

The paper said the other 33 Islamic militants, who included one woman, were killed in an operation in the Hachacha forest, about 30 kilometres from the cemetery.

The blast there Tuesday, the first directly to target children, killed four young Muslim boys and wounded 18 others during a ceremony to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the start of Algeria's war for independence.

The cemetery attack has been claimed, though authorities blamed it on armed Islamic radicals who have been waging a campaign of armed insurgency against the government since it annulled elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win in January 1992.

Talks between the FIS and the government broke down last month, but the FIS dis-

claimed and condemned the attack. Exiled FIS leader Abdul Baki Sabraoui in France alleged that Algerian security forces were responsible.

Tension further rose when 17 Islamic radicals were killed Tuesday and Wednesday by security forces after an unnamed negotiator was shot dead.

The Algerian conflict has left between 10,000 and 12,000 people dead since the cycle of violence erupted more than two-and-a-half years ago.

The United States expressed deep concern Friday over the continuing violence in Algeria and called for dialogue between the government and Islamic militants.

"We do believe that there are ways in which you can expand the political dialogue and expand the circle of contacts without including those who espouse terrorism as a way of addressing the conflict," State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said.

"The violence that continues in Algeria has been of very deep concern to us, not only because they are directed against westerners and foreigners ... but also because they've been so fundamentally damaging to the people of Algeria."

The United States had called on repeated occasions for discussions between the government and the FIS.

"We don't believe it is impossible for them to have that type of dialogue with those who reject" violence.

## Lawmakers draw clear pro- and anti-treaty lines

(Continued from page 1)

their national efforts to achieve socio-economic development and improve the living conditions in a just and balanced manner," he said.

"In the light of the regional competition expected in the coming era of peace we are in a need of courageous and frank revision of our administrative system with a view to raising its efficiency and we need a national programme to serve the country in the peace era marked with openness on the part of the executive authorities to the Jordanian public."

On behalf of the Democratic Bloc in Parliament, I declare approval of the draft law on the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and support the Foreign Affairs Committee's report and recommendations in this respect."

Mohammad Odeh Njadat (Southern Bedouins)

The best ending to war or conflict is peace, and Jordan, through signing the peace treaty with Israel, has arrived at peace and secured its rights, said Mr. Njadat.

"I bless the treaty and wholeheartedly support His Majesty King Hussein's steps and those of the government in accomplishing this major achievement for the Kingdom," he said.

Referring to Palestine, Mr. Njadat said Jordan has more than any other Arab country extended help to the Palestinians, and therefore "we cannot allow any one to try to outbid us in this respect or to tamper with our principled stands."

"We all should stand in the same trench and speak one language aimed at handling our own affairs with dialogue and with constructive means," Mr. Njadat said.

Miftah Lawzi (Amman-Jubeiha)

The peace treaty with Israel was a natural result of the Madrid conference and the negotiations which preceded the signing of the treaty came with full authorisation from the Jordanian people, said Mr. Lawzi.

Both the National Charter and Parliament have approved of Jordan's steps towards reaching peace with Israel and authorised the government to pursue efforts to attain that goal, he said.

"Therefore this treaty is a natural outcome of the series of developments and a good result achieved in the midst of regional and international circumstances," he added.

Ibrahim Samara Zoubi (Razatha and Bani Kanafeh)

Mr. Samara spoke on behalf of Aref Bataineh, Abdul Hadi Al Majali, Jamal Khreisheh, Nawaf Al Qadhi, Mohammad Njadat, Salem Zawaideh and Khalid Al Ajarmeh.

The peace treaty has enhanced Jordan's national identity by asserting the Kingdom's geographic boundaries and returned the lost lands and water resources," Mr. Zoubi said.

"Furthermore, the treaty has retained and respected Jordan's historic rights in Jerusalem's holy places."

"Having examined all the articles of the treaty, I declare my full backing of it and to King Hussein's steps towards peace."

Fawzi Zoubi — (Ramtha)

Mr. Zoubi defended the peace treaty saying the Kingdom did not compromise on any of its rights. "Jordan has paid a heavy price all the past years for adopting pan-Arab stands," Mr. Zoubi said. The country had only reaped a siege of its economy and political isolation, he added.

Noting that the Palestinians chose their way and are

pursuing their own path, Mr. Zoubi said that in the face of the situation Jordan found in the peace treaty a way out of the present predicament as it ensured the return of all Jordanian rights.

Following the Palestinians' option to follow a separate path, Jordan found itself politically isolated and realised that many things were going on behind the scene and that proposed solutions could be adopted at the Kingdom's expense," he said.

Some had wanted Jordan to serve as a mere pressure card but not assuming a meaningful role while others had wanted to see the end of this country," he added.

"All these have motivated Jordan to follow the path of peace and conclude the treaty which ensures the return of all its rights," he said.

Through this treaty, he said, Jordan has succeeded in putting an end to Israel's expansionist designs and ended the plot which aimed at creating from Jordan a substitute homeland for the Palestinians.

The fact that Israeli farm-lands still exist on Jordanian territory does not mean that Jordan's rights are compromised, he said, noting that Jordanians own lands in neighbouring Arab states and they have to obtain permits to cultivate them and that other Arab nationals own land in Jordan and they continue to develop their property.

Through this treaty Jordan has opened the door for investments in the country and for economic projects which means more trade with the world, more tourism and an end of sufferings for many people, he said.

"I hereby declare my full support for the treaty," he concluded.

Miftah Ruheimi (Jerash)

"This treaty came as a fruit of national efforts exerted by Jordan under the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein and therefore it deserves support and appreciation from all honourable people in Jordan," Mr. Ruheimi said.

He said he expected the treaty to open the way for Jordan to receive international economic assistance and an end to the people's sufferings.

Ahmad Kasasbeh (Karak) (Islamist)

The treaty can only be described as one facet of Israel's hostile acts against the nation and a new form of struggle for destiny between the Arabs and the Jews, Mr. Kasasbeh said.

Charging that the treaty would end Jordan's ties with other Arab and Muslim countries, he said it would also deny Jordan its other legitimate rights and those of the Arab and Muslim people. He said that the treaty was a violation of the first article of the Jordanian Constitution which states that Jerusalem and the West Bank are part of Jordanian territory and cannot be ceded to Israel.

Referring to article eight of the treaty, Mr. Kasasbeh said that it provides for the Palestinians to be settled in lands other than Palestine. He said Israel was preparing to brainwash future Arab generations making plans to employ Arab youth as labourers for Israel's benefit. He demanded that Parliament condemn the treaty.

Hamed Abu Jamus (Amman — Marka)

Voicing support for the treaty, Mr. Abu Jamus said that for the first time in its history Israel recognises its borders with Jordan. "This is a great achievement and gain for Jordan supported by the United States, the mightiest power on earth," he said.

"By scrutinising the different articles of the treaty one can see that it ensured the rights of Jordan in land and water

and secured its boundaries," he added. At the same time the treaty did not infringe on the Palestinian people's rights, Mr. Abu Jamus said.

Not only did the treaty bury Israel's old concept of creating a substitute Palestinian homeland in Jordan but also reaffirmed the Kingdom's sovereignty and opened the door for the Kingdom to play a leading role in the region, said the deputy.

Ibrahim Zeid Keilani (Amman) (Islamist)

Dr. Keilani demanded that Parliament reject the peace treaty with Israel. He quoted the Holy Quran as banning Muslims from concluding peace with the usurpers of Arab territory, and merging Israel's economy with that of the Arab and Muslim economies.

Citing historian Tweinbi, Dr. Keilani said Israel subsists on two pillars — divisions of Arab countries and foreign assistance.

He predicted that the Arabs would not remain divided and the foreign assistance to Israel would not last.

Dr. Keilani considered the treaty with Israel as marking the beginning of the history of the Jewish state.

Dr. Keilani accused the government of violating pan-Arab and Islamic principles and said that by concluding the agreement the government said that it has restored Jordan's rights in land and water but this is a very narrow-minded regional outlook, he said.

He said Jordan should not view the situation from the point of view of the Sykes-Picot treaty.

The treaty had been concluded while the Arabs are at total disarray and divided, Dr. Keilani said. The treaty benefits the enemy alone and overlooks Arab and Islamic rights in holy Jerusalem.

He also criticised the treaty for providing for joint security and for combating terrorism and for "depriving the refugees of the right to return to their homeland."

Nader Thuheirat (Koura)

Voicing support for the peace treaty, Mr. Thuheirat said that had it not been for the wise leadership of King Hussein Jordan could not have reached this stage and regained all its rights.

Speaking in his name and on behalf of Tawfiq Kreishan, Ali Al Shatti, Mohammad Howaimel and Salem Zawaideh, Mr. Thuheirat said the treaty does not in any manner impinge on the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. Nor does it cause damage to Jordan's relations with the other Arab countries, he said.

Stressing that Jordan does not condone acts of terrorism, Mr. Thuheirat said the Kingdom supports the rights of all groups to express their free opinion. But he said that Israel should also abide by all international treaties, including a ban on the use of mass destruction weapons.

"We share in the fear of economic relations with Israel in view of the fact that Israel is much more advanced than Jordan in technical and economic fields and we fear that Israel will impose its hegemony on the Jordanian economy. Therefore we should take measures to protect the national economy when concluding any economic agreement with Israel," he said.

The government should exert all its efforts to ensure the return of the refugees to their Palestinian lands in line with U.N. resolutions, he said.

"We refuse to see Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital and we demand that the Holy City be returned in implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and we demand that Israel continue to respect Jordan's role in the holy places," he said.

94 killed in Kabul battles

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the other side of the Kabul river.

Smoke from a huge fire in the vicinity of Babar Gardens was still billowing into the sky Saturday, reportedly from nearby buildings of the former state-owned heavy industrial estate called Jangalak, controlled by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami faction.

Skirmishing between the frontline positions of pro-Rabbani troops and Wahdat continued Saturday in front of the Mohammadia Mosque just west of Dehmadaz Square, where sporadic fire from small arms and recoil-

less rifles were heard. Pro-Rabbani troops said they were trying to blast a small pocket of Wahdat fighters from the Ghazi High School, which is situated in front of the blue-domed mosque.

At Kabul University defending pro-Rabbani troops said there had been no Friday offensive against their positions although they came under heavy weapons bombardment.

The university library continues to suffer the ravages of bombardment and looting of books.

Two civilians seen stuffing volumes of fairy tales and



Islamic Action Front deputies try to make a Lower House of Parliament (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)

## House begins debate

(Continued from page 1)

card so that they can strengthen their position in their talks with Israel?" Mr. Habashneh said.

The strongest response to the opposition came from President of the 17-member National Action Front Abdul Hadi Majali, who said Jordan had received nothing but ingratitude for its calls for Arab coordination.

Referring to the Kingdom's support for the Palestinians, which included providing them with an umbrella for entering the Madrid talks, Mr. Majali said it was the Palestinians who went their own way and abandoned coordination with the Kingdom.

"Instead of receiving thanks for our position, we

were blamed," Mr. Majali said.

Criticising what he called empty slogans that do not recognise reality, Mr. Majali said: "Those who speak of the national and Islamic dimensions" are expecting from Jordan more than it can provide and are being oblivious to the realities of the day which prove that there is no unified Arab stand or position.

Supporters of the peace process also attempted to refute opposition claims that peace with Israel will expose Arab culture to Israeli domination, saying the Arab and Muslim culture is too strong to fall under Israeli cultural domination.

Those deputies also said the Kingdom has not abandoned the cause of refugees as their future will be discussed in accordance with international law, noting that the PLO has postponed discussion of the issue.

While opponents of the treaty focused more on ideological reasons for opposing the treaty, its supporters called for viewing the accord from realistic perspectives and in terms of what it achieved for the Kingdom.

Opponents spoke of Arab ties and Islamic teachings, while proponents of the treaty emphasised that the Jordanian interests should be the yardstick against which it is measured in light of Arab division and lack of appreciation for the efforts the Kingdom has made in its pursuit of better Arab relations.



TOMBS DAMAGED: Egyptians walk through the rubble next to the Temple of Seti in the King's Valley after torrential rains overflooded several Pharaonic sites in the Luxor area, including the Tomb of Tutankhamun and the Temple of Seti (see page 12) (AFP photo)

## Egyptian flood victims buried

(Continued from page 12)

into flames during Wednesday's heavy storm.

The river swept down the river bed, engulfing houses, a mosque and a large grain factory and leaving a black scar running through the town before pouring into the nearby fields.

Government officials say the houses were built after the fuel tanks were installed nearly 20 years ago.

Residents say they were there first and accuse the government of playing down the tragedy because it was a fault for building the fuel tanks so close to them.

"If one hundred houses are

destroyed, they will say it is 10. If 500 people die, they will say it is 100. They won't admit anything," complained Mohammad Mahmoud Kharafallah as he waded through the mud-filled foundations of his house.

Two hundred workers toiled Saturday with picks to clear flood debris from the ancient tombs in the Valley of the Kings, one of Egypt's finest Pharaonic sites and a top tourist attraction.

"Fortunately the tomb is not decorated and the empty sarcophagus is made of granite," according to an Egyptian antiquities official, Sabri Abdul Aziz.

"In ancient times, the tomb was regularly flooded and it was submerged in water when it was first discovered," he said.

commentaries of The Holy Koran inside their clothes claimed the books were for reading at home.

"If we want to fuel our winter fires we will take the Russian-language books," they said.

In the wake of Friday's fighting Kabul was mostly calm Saturday. Pro-Rabbani gunners harassed Wahdat with intermittent heavy weapons' fire but the capital was spared of heavy rocketing by Hezb forces.

The Rabbani government is expected to respond soon to the latest United Nations peace proposal. U.N. envoy, Mahmoud Mestiri outlined the plan during recent visits to Afghanistan, where he met with faction leaders.

[illegible]

## Financial Markets

Jordan Times  
in co-operation with  
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 3/11/94	New York Close Date: 4/11/94
Sterling Pound	1.6175	1.6160
Deutsche Mark	1.5187	1.5140
Swiss Franc	1.5680	1.5673
French Franc	5.2075	5.1915
Japanese Yen	97.73	97.45
European Currency Unit	1.2550	1.2563

100 Per Cent

European Currency Unit

Source: Reuters

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.81	5.43	5.75	6.12
Sterling Pound	5.50	5.57	6.25	6.93
Deutsche Mark	4.62	4.93	5.06	5.43
Swiss Franc	5.50	5.51	4.00	4.43
French Franc	5.31	5.50	5.68	6.18
Japanese Yen	5.15	5.16	2.31	2.62
European Currency Unit	5.46	5.51	6.08	6.60

Source: Reuters

General Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6920	0.6940
Sterling Pound	1.1176	1.1232
Deutsche Mark	0.4569	0.4592
Swiss Franc	0.5458	0.5485
French Franc	0.1332	0.1339
Japanese Yen	0.7096	0.7131
Dutch Guilder	0.4074	0.4094
Swedish Krona	0.0445	0.0447
Italian Lira	0.0445	0.0447
Spanish Peseta	0.0445	0.0447

Source: Reuters

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8210	1.8418
Lebanese Lira	3.40945	0.04540
Saudi Riyal	0.1537	0.1555
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3100	2.3700
Qatari Riyal	0.1558	0.1560
Egyptian Pound	0.0000	0.0000
Omani Rial	1.7540	1.8100
UAE Dirham	0.1875	0.1895
Greek Drachma	0.0715	0.0750
Cypriot Pound	1.4235	1.5325

Source: Reuters

## Tasty hommous, falafel set for bitter price hike

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — If you have noticed that the tasty falafel balls at the popular restaurant next door have become smaller and that you are getting less pieces for the same money and if you wonder why that is, you should have had a look at Jordan's tabloids during the past weeks.

One popular weekly, for example, depicted hommous dealers and importers as voracious sharks, swallowing innocent Jordanian citizens fighting for their humble dish, which, like everything else in the country, has once again become more expensive.

"We are seven at home," says Um Hani, a housewife from Zarqa, "we eat falafel and hommous every day. Sometimes I make my own hommous at home, which is cheaper. But it is a lot of work and even the grain has become a lot more expensive."

The price of falafel increased by 25 per cent in mid October. The popular hom-

mous platé, the so-called "meat of the poor," officially still costs 225 fils, but the Ministry of Supply, responsible for the pricing of the nutritious dish, is expected to readjust prices soon.

Many restaurants have already raised prices to 250-270 fils per plate. Other restaurants cannot but continue selling the hommous plate at a fixed 225 fils, although the market price of hommous grain has almost doubled since July this year. They somehow cope with the disproportion between production cost and official pricing — naturally at the expense of the consumer.

"A tonne of first class hommous used to cost us around JD 400 until this summer," a hommous importer in the downtown area of Suk Al Sukkar explains. "Then, in August, prices started going up, reaching JD 700-800 per tonne in October."

Most hommous importers attribute the price hike to this year's poor hommous crop in Turkey. Because of its abundant water resources — hom-

mous needs a wet environment to grow — Turkey dominates the regional hommous market.

An official source, who requested anonymity, said that in addition to this year's poor crop, several deliveries of hommous coming from Turkey were rejected by the Jordanian authorities at Aqaba and sent back because pesticides had been detected, thus causing a further shortage and price increases on the Jordanian market.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Jordan in 1993 imported 14,657 tonnes of hommous, 95 per cent of which were from Turkey.

The remaining five per cent were brought from Syria and Britain.

Some businessmen suspect that the market-dominating Turkish dealers may have tuned the prices.

"I do not think so," contends a big hommous importer in Suk Al Sukkar, "the crops have indeed been bad and you should also take into account that there is war in the Kurdish areas of Turkey. We used to buy a lot from Diyarbakir, which is in the centre of Turkish Kurdis-

tan."

Jordan produces only the so-called "hommous baladi," a grain of relatively low quality not suitable for the popular hommous puree. In 1993, 2,838 tonnes of "hommous baladi" were harvested in Jordan, of which 54 tons were exported, mainly to the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia.

90 per cent of the hommous imported to Jordan is used for hommous and falafel. Restaurant owners throughout town complain that although the prices of all raw materials have gone up significantly, they have not been allowed to increase their prices for more than five years.

As a result of the recent price hike, some falafel bakers have started to use beans as a basic ingredient, instead of hommous. This, as one grains dealer claims, has led to a 20 per cent increase of the market prices for beans.

Other restaurants reduced the quantity or quality of their product. "We stopped selling hommous when the price of the grain went up," says a restaurant owner close to Abdali bus station. The owner of a very popu-

lar restaurant in Jebel Luweibdeh complains that "the government does not understand. This is not a business anymore, but rather a social service we give to the people." But he admits that another price increase will be hard for his customers, who are mainly government employees and workers.

"With a salary no more than JD 100 a month, and sometimes even less, they are going to feel it. But now, there is hardly any profit in this business," he pointed out.

Though businessmen are very likely to claim they do not make any profits, prices have indeed gone up: Plastic boxes used to take away the nutritious dish increased by 50 per cent, olive oil and tahina have doubled and tripled, says the owner of a popular 24-hour restaurant downtown, one of the busiest hommous places in Amman.

"We are making money by selling tea, the hommous is hardly profitable at these prices," he explains. "I wish the prices were determined by the market and not by the government. But as long as

there are free prices, the price per plate of hommous should be raised to at least 300 fils (now: 225 fils), to cover the production costs," he adds.

The Restaurant Owner's Association (Niqabat Ashab Al Mazaim), which represents 1,400 classified popular restaurants in Amman, equally calls for free market prices of hommous and falafel. "But 250 to 260 fils per plate would be enough to cover the production cost and ensure a reasonable profit margin," says Mr. Yassin Akkash, director of the association. "Since the grain accounts for only 10-12 per cent of the total production costs, a 10-15 per cent increase of prices would be sufficient," he says.

According to Mr. Akkash, the association has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Supply, "the results of which we expect to see any day now. The Ministry of Supply so far has not declared whether, when and how much the prices for hommous are going to increase officially. In spite of numerous attempts, the ministry refused to give any information."

## Abu Dhabi aims to quadruple industrial output

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Abu Dhabi, the main oil producer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has launched a drive to quadruple its industrial output in the next 14 years as part of attempts to diversify its economy.

The emirate has approved the establishment of three major industrial zones and earmarked an initial sum of 100 million dirhams (\$27.2 million) in soft loans to potential investors, the UAE press reported Saturday.

The projects followed a study by the government-run Emirates Industry Corporation (EIC) on long-term plans to diversify the economy following a sharp decline in oil prices over the past decade.

"It is expected that such projects will push the gross domestic product (GDP) in

the industrial sector from 5.58 billion dirhams (\$1.52 billion) to 11.1 billion dirhams (\$3.02 billion) in 1998, to 16.3 billion dirhams (\$4.45 billion) in 2003 and 20.9 billion dirhams (\$5.69 billion) in 2008," said the study published in local newspapers.

Officials said the new zones would be set up in sites close to ports and population centres and industrial projects would include light and medium products as well as petrochemicals, which are still absent in the UAE despite its enormous crude oil and gas reserves.

Abu Dhabi already has small industries including chemicals, clothes and textiles, foodstuffs, paper, home appliances, cement and other building materials. In neighbouring Dubai, more than \$1

billion have been invested in the Jebel Ali free zone in manufacturing, services and marketing.

The industrial sector has been the main target of the UAE and other Gulf oil producers seeking to lessen reliance on crude exports, which still account for more than 80 per cent of their total exports. This is because their agricultural and tourism sectors are limited.

"It is just the start," an EIC official told AFP. "We have chalked out a far-reaching industrialisation plan which we are certain will succeed given our modern infrastructure, cheap energy and large financing capabilities."

The UAE, a key OPEC member, sits atop 98 billion barrels of crude, nearly 10 per cent of the world's total

oil reserves, besides around 5.7 trillion cubic metres (190 trillion cubic feet) of natural gas.

The government set up an industrial bank in the mid-1980s to extend loans and technical assistance for manufacturing projects as the lending activity of the commercial banks has been concentrated on trade and construction.

The UAE's non-oil industrial sector has steadily grown over the past few years, with its GDP rising from around 9.7 billion dirhams (\$2.64 billion) in 1990 to 9.9 billion dirhams (\$2.69 billion) in 1992 and 10.89 billion dirhams (\$2.96 billion) in 1993.

The 1993 figure accounted for around eight per cent of the total GDP of 131.6 billion dirhams (\$35.8 billion).

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## McDonnell to sell 40 jets to China for \$1.6b

WASHINGTON (R) — McDonnell Douglas Corp has signed a \$1.6 billion deal to supply China with 40 commercial jetliners, half of which will be built in Chinese factories.

The order, finalised Friday, covers both MD-80s and MD-90s, which will be delivered to China over the next four years.

Long under negotiation, the announcement modifies an earlier deal and is perfectly timed to coincide with next week's elections, when jobs and the health of the economy are a high priority among disgruntled voters.

California is a tough race for the Democrats, and much of the new order will be filled by west coast workers. "We all know that there is a simple equation: American exports equal American jobs," said Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, who presided over the signing ceremony.

Mr. Brown has been instrumental in the plane order, lobbying hard for new business both here and during a mission to China this summer that resulted in billions of dollars in business.

He cited the deal as an example of "the Clinton administration's policy of commercial engagement with China."

McDonnell Chairman John McDonnell, who signed the agreement, said the new order should secure about 4,600 high-skill, high-wage jobs across the United States.

He also tipped his hat to Mr. Brown's lobbying drive, saying the commerce chief "has expanded and changed the meaning of what U.S. government can do to support U.S. industry."

Even as other U.S.-Sino trade spats come to a head, Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing said the commercial accord would enhance ties between the two sides.

"Secretary Brown and I have reached consensus that we should join in efforts to strengthen our cooperation," Mr. Li said through a translator.

The original deal called for the manufacture in Shanghai of 20 intermediate range MD-80 twinjets and 20 MD-90 aircraft, McDonnell's latest jetliner.



## Al Hussein regain lead; Karmel score first win

By Aileen Bannayan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Al Hussein regained their lead atop the First Division soccer standings following their 1-0 win over Al Jazireh, while Al Wihdat who reigned at the top for the past four weeks, dropped to second place on goal difference after the conclusion of the 10th week of the prestigious competition.

Al Wihdat lost ground after scoring three consecutive draws, the latest a goalless tie with Al Ramtha who moved up to third place.

Newcomers Al Karmel finally earned their first win over Al Jeel: Al Ahli moved up to sixth place following their 2-0 win over Al Arabi, while Al Qadissieh and Shabab Al Hussein settled for a 1-1 draw and could not improve their ninth and tenth standings.

Al Faisali-Kufroum match was disrupted because of heavy rain. With only one week to go before the first leg is concluded Nov. 11, Al Hussein now lead with 17 points and the best scoring average at 30-10.

Al Wihdat also have 17 points, but have one of the lowest scoring averages at 11-2.

Over 15,000 fans at Al Wihdat-Al Ramtha match left the stadium disappointed when both teams failed to score after a series of wasted chances.

Both teams allowed their younger bench players to take part. Al Juma'a and Mohammad Abu Zame'h substituted for Al Wihdat's Hisham Abdul Mune'm

and Mohammad Al Shama'i.

Badran Al Shaqran and Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib wasted Al Ramtha's most serious scoring chances as both teams settled for a tie.

Meanwhile Al Ahli finally pleased their fans and improved their standing following their 2-0 win over Al Arabi at Al Hassan Stadium in Irbid.

Al Ahli's captain Nari Yadaj scored both his team's goals, the first from a header in the 32nd minute.

Al Arabi's Ahmad Subh and Ayman Al Omari were closely guarded by Al Ahli's alert defence who were determined not to allow an equaliser.

Yadaj secured his team's vital win when he netted the second goal with one minute left in the match.

In another match, Al Karmel finally scored a face-saving win that gave them four points in the standings. However their modest capabilities and ex-

perience seem unable to prevent both team's relegation once again.

Zakarya Al Shibel opened scoring for Al Jeel in the 32nd minute, but Al Karmel equalised from a penalty kick only three minutes later.

Al Karmel won the first half 2-1 after a goal by Hussein Naser in the 43rd minute.

Al Jeel did not give up and their morale was given a boost when Tha'er Abu Sha'rah netted the equaliser in the 46th minute.

Al Karmel won the match scoring their third goal in the 80th minute. At Al Mafrag Stadium, Al Hussein's Khaled Khatatbeh stunned Al Jazireh with a surprising early goal in the 7th minute.

Simon George and Ahmad Rasheed led Al Jazireh's attacks but players had a hard time controlling the ball after heavy rainfall swamped the stadium.

The match was halted 15

minutes but continued again and Aref Hussein wasted the only real chance to score as the match ended with an important win for Al Hussein before they face titleholders Al Faisali next week.

In another match greatly affected by the prevailing weather conditions, Shabab Al Hussein managed to draw with Al Qadissieh as both team's standings remained unchanged.

Although Al Qadissieh's Ra'ed Tu'meh opened scoring in the 23rd minute, they could not hold on to their lead as Shabab Al Hussein seemed determined to score and Adnan Al Lahham gave his team the precious equaliser in the 81st minute.

Al Faisali-Kufroum match was the only one that was disrupted by heavy rainfall when the referee halted the match in the 63rd minute.

Both teams had failed to score until that time, although Al Faisali played a more attacking game, but were successfully contained by a well-knit Kufroum defence.

Only 10 goals were scored during the past week compared to the highest number of 22 in the seventh week.

### Standings after 10th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Hussein	10	8	1	1	30	10	17
Wihdat	10	7	3	—	11	2	17
Ramtha	10	5	4	1	17	4	14
Faisali	9	5	3	1	19	6	13
Jazireh	10	6	1	3	15	8	13
Ahli	10	4	3	3	13	13	11
Kufroum*	9	4	1	4	17	18	9
Arabi	10	3	2	5	12	19	8
Qadissieh	10	1	4	5	11	18	6
Shabab Al Hussein	10	1	3	6	14	24	5
Karmel	10	1	2	7	7	24	4
Jeel	10	—	1	9	6	26	1

\* Faisali-Kufroum have a postponed match.

## Agassi knocks out No. 1 Sampras

PARIS (Agencies) — Andre Agassi underlined his vow to dethrone Pete Sampras by beating the world number one in a match full of brilliant tennis to reach the semifinals of the Paris Open Friday.

Eighth seed Agassi delighted the French crowd with his explosive baseline game to knock out top seed Sampras 7-6 7-5 in just over two hours of a superb all-American clash.

Three-time champion Boris Becker and defending champion Goran Ivanisevic both lost as Switzerland's Marc Rosset edged Becker in a hard-serving contest, 7-6 (7-3), 7-6 (9-7) and Chang upset Ivanisevic, 3-6, 6-4 (7-4).

Fourth-seeded Sergi Bruguera, the two-time French Open champion, was the fourth semifinalist by beating unseeded Czech Petr Korda, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4).

Rosset and Chang meet in the semifinals followed by Bruguera versus the eighth-seeded Agassi in the other.

The No. 1 ranked Sampras had 19 aces and was a break up in both sets but couldn't handle the pressure of some blistering service returns by Agassi when it counted.

"When I miss a first serve, I have to stay back on the second," Sampras said. "Then he hits that backhand down the line as well as anyone I have ever played."

"I am playing my best tennis I have ever played now and when you are playing really well, you want the best players because it is a great chance for your ranking, a great chance for your confidence," Agassi said.

"It's the best Andre has played against me in a long time," Sampras said. "I think



Boris Becker

we bring out the best in each other."

Agassi had won the U.S. Open this year and Wimbledon in 1992. Sampras has won Wimbledon the last two years and took the U.S. title in 1993.

It was Agassi's fifth win in 11 meetings against Sampras but Sampras had taken the last three, including a 6-3, 6-1 tour in Osaka last April.

It looked like another Sampras victory when he took a 4-2 lead in the first set. But Agassi equalized it and forced a tiebreaker.

Sampras was up 4-2 but again Agassi rallied to equal it at 6-6. The longest rally of the match, more than 20 strokes, put Agassi up 7-6 when he hit a backhand winner. A backhand just long by Sampras put Agassi one set up.

The second set had a similar scenario. Sampras was up 3-1 but Agassi came back to tie it. Agassi had four match points come in go as Sampras saved them with aces.

However on the fifth match point it was a typical winning service return by Agassi that ended the 2-hour, 2-minute match.

The Becker-Rosset affair had both men with serves at more than 200 kilometres an hour (125 mph). Rosset ended with 14 aces while Becker had 15.

A double fault in the first tiebreaker by the sixth-seeded Becker gave Rosset the advantage at 3-2 which he increased to 5-2 and went on to take that one.

"He had more chances than the whole set, he was the better player," Becker said. Rosset had the only four break points and all came in the first set.

The second set tiebreaker went back-and-forth, at one

time Rosset, seeded 14th, scored three straight aces his serve, Becker had two set points at 6-5 and 7-6 but did not convert either.

"It came down to me having two set points and one on my serve and I missed an ace just by half an inch," Becker said. "I hit a good second serve. He hit a good backhand return. I had a low volley which caught me really by surprise. I hit that volley behind him and he hit it down the line which saved him probably the match."

A 7-7 Becker netted a forehand volley to give Rosset a match point. A good solid forehand down the line following his serve gave Rosset the victory after 1 hour 38 minutes.

The second-seeded Ivanisevic had 23 aces but committed three times as many unforced errors — 45 to 15 — to keep Chang in the match.

## Surprises mark NBA season openers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Two things are certain after the opening night of the National Basketball Association (NBA) season.

The Orlando Magic need some work before they are title contenders. And the idea of indoor fireworks, is all wet.

Long-time losers Washington upset title hopeful Orlando 110-108 here Friday despite game highs of 28 points and 12 rebounds by Magic all-star centre Shaquille O'Neal.

The most bizarre incident came in San Antonio, when smoke from pre-game fireworks set off a water cannon that sprayed fans and delayed the game by more than an hour. No one was injured.

although drenched spectators compared conditions to a hurricane.

The Spurs went on to lose 123-118 to Golden State. Ironically, both teams were delayed last year by water from a ceiling leak at the same arena.

Ten other first-night games included Portland's 121-100 triumph over the Los Angeles Clippers in Yokohama, the third time in five years the league has opened with games in Japan.

Hakeem Olajuwon scored 19 points and reigning NBA champion Houston opened with a 90-86 home triumph

over New Jersey. Charles Smith scored 23 points and the New York Knicks, who lost the title series last June in the maximum seven games, beat Boston 120-107.

Scottie Pippen scored 22 points to lead Chicago past Charlotte 89-83 while Marty Conlon and Johnny Newman each scored 20 points to pace Milwaukee to a 91-86 triumph at Philadelphia.

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Q1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠A7 ♠EQ883 ♠4 ♠A65  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?

Q2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠A93 ♠K ♠A9762  
The bidding has proceeded:  
West North East South  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What action do you take?

Q3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠K104 ♠K982 ♠A7632  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
2 NT Pass  
What do you bid now?

Q4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠K7 ♠93 ♠A1092 ♠Q7852  
Partner opens the bidding with one club. What do you respond?

Q5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠Q1072 ♠EQ95 ♠K7 ♠A96  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?

Q6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠9843 ♠1082 ♠Q95 ♠A87  
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

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## Schneider opens final world cup challenge

SAAS FEE, Switzerland (R) — Olympic champion Vreni Schneider embarks on her final world cup season this weekend after a decade of Alpine skiing excellence.

Schneider, who will be 30 November 26, has been hampered in her preparations by a meniscus operation and is wary about her prospects for Sunday's slalom.

"I have been training hard and need time to get back into top form. But for a start I think I should be able to get into the top five or six," she said.

The new season kicks off on a glacier in this Valais region resort with a men's parallel slalom, an event which carries prize money of 120,000 Swiss francs (\$95,000) but no individual world cup points.

Kjetil Andre Aamodt, Norway's overall world cup champion, heads the field of 32 qualifiers who race in parts in a competition which counts only for Nations' Cup points.

But Alberto Tomba, Italy's former Olympic champion, will not be among the starters.

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<b>TODAY</b>	Leslie Nielsen & Priscilla Presley in <b>Naked Gun 33 1/3</b> The Final Insult Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15	Lorenzo Lanas — in <b>SWORDS MAN</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" <b>Disco — Disco</b> (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15 CONCORD "2" <b>SPEED</b> Shows: 3:15, 5:15, 10:30	Presents <b>"Water is a Gift of Life"</b> A family and children play produced and directed by: Akram Abul Ragheb Daily at 10 a.m. For reservations call tel.: 618274 - 618275	Today & Everyday Abu Awwad in social comedy <b>"PUNCTURED BAG"</b> Theater closes Sunday and Monday	Presents: <b>The political satire:</b> <b>Al Salam Ya Salam</b> Daily at 8:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday is the theatre's holiday.

# U.S. expects no change in Iraq sanctions regime

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States expects the United Nations Security Council to maintain unchanged its programme of sanctions against Iraq when it next discusses the matter on Nov. 14, a State Department spokesman said on Friday.

Iraq's troop buildup near the Kuwaiti border last month has killed off support for easing the trade sanctions even among countries relatively sympathetic to Baghdad, spokesmen Mike McCurry said.

"We're confident that the Security Council will agree with us that no change in sanctions is warranted at that point," Mr. McCurry told a news briefing.

The Security Council holds consultations on the sanctions, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, every 60 days.

At the last meeting in September, France and Russia suggested that if U.N. monitoring over six months showed Iraq could not produce ballistic missiles, chemical or nuclear weapons, sanctions should be lifted.

But the United States and Britain quashed the proposal, which would have allowed Iraq to resume oil exports.

Mr. McCurry said Iraq had now forfeited what support it had due to its recent troop buildup. "We do detect some change in attitude based on what was most recently a very troubling and provocative move by (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein," he said.

Iraq pulled back its troops after the United States and its allies rushed forces to the region to counter any repeat of the 1990 invasion.

Despite last month's crisis, France has continued to sound more amenable to eventual lifting of sanctions. Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said last week the world should send "clear signs" to spell out what Baghdad was expected to do to emerge from its isolation.

Mr. McCurry accused Iraq of across-the-board failure to comply with U.N. demands, including on weapons of mass destruction, recognition of Kuwaiti sovereignty and accounting for Kuwaiti citizens and property missing since the 1990 invasion.

A U.S. diplomat said Wednesday U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright, who chairs the Security Council

this month, could meet with Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz this week.

"There is no meeting scheduled," the U.S. diplomat said, speaking privately, "but if Tariq Aziz sought to meet with the president of the Security Council, (Albright) would meet with him as president of the council."

Mr. Aziz is scheduled to be in New York this week.

If the meeting were to take place, it would be the first official such contact between senior U.S. and Iraqi officials since the end of the Gulf war in 1991, even if Ms. Albright acts only in her capacity as Security Council president.

The U.S. diplomat said that to date, Washington had not changed its position on lifting the international oil embargo on Iraq. Iraq depends heavily on oil exports for its hard currency earnings.

"We see no reason to think that anything should change," the U.S. diplomat said.

"On the contrary, what we have seen since the last review is a provocative action by Iraq," he said, alluding to the Iraqi troop movements to the area near the Kuwaiti border.

Council members are to bear an oral report Nov. 11 by Rolf Ekeus, the head of the U.N. special commission on Iraqi disarmament, which is setting up a system for long-term monitoring of Iraq's military activities.

Allies hold war exercises

More than 100 U.S., British and Kuwaiti special forces soldiers parachuted from U.S. C-130 transport aircraft into the desert Saturday in an exercise aimed at boosting joint operations. U.S. military spokeswoman Major Donna Stacey told the Associated Press the exercise was part of operation Vigilant Warrior, launched last month.

Most of the soldiers in Saturday's airborne assault exercise jumped from C-130s at an altitude of 700 metres. But a few, including U.S. Navy seals, free fell from more than 4,200 metres using steerable parachutes. The exercise was conducted at an unspecified drop zone west of Kuwait City.

# U.S. sees economic frustration behind attack on Arafat

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. State Department said Friday economic frustration among Palestinians in Gaza was behind the rough treatment accorded Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat when he tried to attend a funeral for a militant Islamic leader.

Gazans knocked off Mr. Arafat's headrest Thursday, called him a traitor and threw him out of the mosque funeral. It was his worst political embarrassment since his endorsement by Israel last year as head of the Palestinian administration in Gaza and Jericho.

The State Department took the incident in stride Friday. Spokesman Michael McCurry said Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin "has a very difficult and contentious political environment to deal with, as well."

Mr. Rabin, who has turned over Gaza and Jericho to the PLO and is prepared to surrender at least part of the Golan Heights to Syria, has been denounced by political opponents as a traitor, too.

President Bill Clinton's administration and Mr. Rabin's government are depending on Mr. Arafat and his police to maintain order in Gaza and, ultimately, throughout the West Bank, which also will be given to him to administer.

"We continue to work with them to make sure they carry out the functions that they have been given," spokesman McCurry said. "Chairman Arafat has a very difficult and delicate political position, but then so does every other leader in the region."

The administration has raised pledges of \$2.5 billion in assistance to the PLO. At a

regional economic summit meeting last week in Casablanca, Mr. Rabin appealed for help for Mr. Arafat and his organisation. But the assistance is slow in coming because of the violence and the PLO's lack of expertise in taking administrative control.

Mr. McCurry, speaking for the State Department, saw the attack on Mr. Arafat as a reflection of the people's frustrations with a hard life and a slow pace of reform — and not as rejection of the agreement with Israel.

"People now want to see that there are dividends," the spokesman said. "That there are rewards for having taken these risks to make peace, and there is inevitably frustration when they don't see that type of improvement in quality of life."

At the same time, Mr. McCurry said Mr. Arafat "continues to be the person with whom we can work to try to improve the quality of life for people in the territories, and we continue to do so because he is the authoritative voice when it comes to the Palestinian authority."

Mr. Rabin said Friday that Islamic fundamentalism and poor living standards could jeopardise peace agreements with Arab states.

"Without treating the two main enemies: radical, terrorist fundamentalist Islam, poverty and ignorance, there won't be stability in the Middle East," Mr. Rabin told about 100 fellow Labour Party members at their Tel Aviv headquarters.

Listing peace agreements signed with Egypt in 1979, the Palestinians in 1993 and Jordan last month, he said that unless living standards and attitudes improved, "a question mark could hang over these achievements."



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday receives Russian envoy Victor Posavalyuk (Petra photo)

# King receives Russian message

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday received a verbal message from Russian President Boris Yeltsin conveyed to him by Russian envoy Victor Posavalyuk expressing support for the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

Mr. Posavalyuk quoted Mr. Yeltsin as pledging continued Russian efforts towards achieving peace on the other Arab-Israeli tracks.

King Hussein asked the envoy to carry his greetings to the Russian leader and to thank him for his continued concern over the region's issues.

Mr. Posavalyuk earlier met Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and reviewed with him Russian efforts to give momentum to the peace process on all the Arab-Israeli tracks in cooperation with the United Nations.

The prime minister reiterated Jordan's keenness on arriving at a comprehensive peace in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and voiced Jordan's appreciation of the Russian role.

Dr. Majali also expressed Jordan's desire to promote Jordanian-Russian economic, technical and trade relations.

Earlier, the Russian envoy met Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and discussed the peace treaty.

# Egyptian families bury victims of fire and flood

DRONKA, Egypt (Agencies) — When Mohammad Mahmoud Mustafa went to the morgue to identify 10 relatives burned to death in the fire that engulfed this southern Egyptian town, he could barely recognise the charred bodies of his family.

"I saw my brother. I could tell it was his face. The others we just guessed from their size and bits of clothes," he said.

"We buried them all last night in the family grave," he added, clutching the 10 hospital permits that allowed the bodies of his brother, four nephews and their children to be released for burial.

Three days after burning fuel swept through Dronka on a deluge of floodwater, officials say most of the nearly 500 victims have been buried. Many were claimed by relatives. Others were buried in a communal grave.

But rescue workers on Saturday morning pulled seven bodies from charred and waterlogged homes while people waited gloomily for news of relatives still missing.

People picked through the wreckage of their houses, unearthing sacks of grain, plates, and broken furniture.

A baby boy was found alive Saturday after floating like Moses on straw bedding which saved him from the flood and fire.

The seven-month-old baby Hussein Tolba Hatab floated for three days and 15 kilometres on the makeshift

bedding after floods swept through his home, killing his parents and seven brothers and sisters.

A farmer found the boy after he went to drain his field. "When I tried to drain water off my field this morning, I found a child who was floating on his back. His eyes were closed," Abdul Hamdan Yunes told AFP.

"I took him in my arms and I saw he was still alive. I ran to my wife and asked her to give him her milk. He is in very good health. It's a miracle. God be praised," the farmer said.

The farmer climbed onto his tractor and drove around trying to find the baby's parents by announcing the news on a loudspeaker.

His aunt recognised the boy and took him in.

"Thanks to God that the fire spared him," Mr. Yunes said.

In the fields outside Dronka, where many bodies were swept along by the floods, corpses were still turning up.

Mahmouda Thabit Mahmoud, taking shelter in the primary school that has been her home since her house was swamped in a sea of mud nearly two metres high, said she had given up hope for her two young grandsons, Mohammad and Mahmoud.

"No one has seen them since the disaster," she said. "Maybe they were carried away in the flood."

At Assiut's main university

Officials doubted if people knew whether they were really burying their own dead or the charred remains of neighbours.

"They were so badly burned no one could tell who they were. People just came to claim a body. I don't know if the found the right ones," said hospital manager Mohammad Ibrahim Taha.

In Dronka, where survivors say they have been left to the mercy of charitable relatives and friends, Mustafa echoed growing bitterness over inaction by a government that many hold partly responsible for the disaster.

"No one is thinking of doing anything for us (Prime Minister Atef) Sedki came here and said a couple of words and left. They say they are giving compensation but there is nothing," he said as he rescued a last waterlogged sack of grain from his burnt-out house.

"There's a hundred homeless families staying with relatives. What's the government going to do?" he said.

He was standing in the area worst hit by the inferno, a dried-up river bed flanked on both sides by cemeteries about one kilometre from the huge fuel tanks that burst

# 94 civilians killed in Kabul war

KABUL (AFP) — At least 94 civilians were wounded in the latest round of heavy fighting in Kabul between forces for and against Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, according to hospital reports Saturday.

In a strong infantry offensive backed by heavy artillery fire the forces of the Hezb-e-Islami and the Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat allies attacked pro-Rabbani positions in south Kabul Friday, but without permanent territorial gains.

Pro-Rabbani troops resting at nearby Dehmadang Square claimed nine enemy bodies were left behind.

"The enemy captured the Russian Cultural Centre from us, but held it for only a very short time before we pushed them out again," one of them said.

The 94 civilian wounded were recorded in the two main downtown Kabul hospitals from Friday's fighting.

Medical staff noted there would be a "large number of casualties" on the other side of the frontlines, but details were not available.

Pro-Rabbani troops in Dehmadang said their rivals started the Friday offensive at dawn with an assault against the nearby eastern district of Babar Gardens on

# Saudi mufti urges Muslims to avoid World Court

CAIRO (AP) — A top Saudi clergyman says Muslim governments should not take their disputes to the World Court but should seek Islamic solutions. The London-headquartered Al Hayat newspaper reported the ruling Saturday by the influential Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia. "Muslims are forbidden by the law of God to resort to international institutions to resolve their disputes," the paper quoted him as saying. "I give my sincerest advice to all the leaders of the Islamic countries... that the only way to resolve their differences on property, rights and political borders, etc... is to resort to the laws of God through a commission of knowledgeable and just scientists of Sharia," he said. The paper did not say what prompted the ruling. But at least three Gulf disputes could end up before the World Court in the Hague. Al Hayat said Sheikh Ben Baz termed appeals to the court as "non-Islamic" and said "Muslims should not resort to them." He added: "God shall punish those who disregard his laws." In addition to his position as mufti, Sheikh Ben Baz is head of the Saudi-headquartered League of the Islamic World.

# Kuwait might test visitors for AIDS

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait might carry out medical tests on frequent visitors to countries with high AIDS infection rates, a newspaper reported on Saturday. "Kuwait is likely to start testing citizens and expatriates who frequently visit countries with a large number of AIDS patients," the Arab Times quoted a health official as saying. Kuwait demands AIDS test for all expatriates working in the emirate and departs all non-Kuwaitis infected with the virus. A committee trying to prevent the spread of AIDS in the emirate is also studying the possibility of imposing an obligatory pre-marital AIDS test, the paper quoted the official as saying. Less than 30 Kuwaiti nationals proved to be infected with the AIDS virus since 1985, the official said. He did not give the number of expatriates infected since.

# Assad, Hrawi study moves in peace talks

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — The presidents of Syria and Lebanon met in Damascus Saturday to discuss Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's refusal to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 calling for Israel's withdrawal from South Lebanon.

President Hafez Al Assad also briefed his Lebanese counterpart, Elias Hrawi, on the outcome of his summit meeting with President Bill Clinton in the Syrian capital last week, a palace spokesman said.

The spokesman, Jubran Khourieh, said that during the five-hour meeting, Mr. Assad and Mr. Hrawi stressed the importance of coordinating the next moves in their tortuous peace negotiations with Israel.

Syria and Lebanon broke off talks last February and the negotiations have been deadlocked ever since.

The sticking points include Israel's refusal to make a commitment to a complete withdrawal from Syria's Golan Heights and South Lebanon, where guerrillas attack the Israeli-occupied zone almost daily.

Syria's media has been lambasting Mr. Rabin for refusing to withdraw from South Lebanon, the last active warzone in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Israelis have occupied a border enclave, known as the "security zone" in South Lebanon since 1985.

On Oct. 29, Mr. Hrawi offered to establish a joint committee with Israel to draw up a timetable for a withdrawal with Lebanese guarantees that guerrillas in South Lebanon would be curbed.

Mr. Rabin has said there will be no pullback just to hold peace talks and has questioned the Lebanese army's ability to rein in the guerrillas.

Syria's Al Thawra daily said Saturday Mr. Rabin's position means that he is "determined to separate South Lebanon from the rest of the land... to swallow it and continue to ignore the principles of a just and comprehensive peace in the region as a whole."

The state-run newspaper said in an editorial that Mr. Rabin's position was part of an Israeli campaign "to black out" Mr. Clinton's efforts to give momentum to the Middle East peace process during his recent tour.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said meanwhile he doubted President Clinton made promises in his meeting with President Assad last month regarding an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

He was reacting to remarks made by Lebanon's Foreign Minister Faris Bouez at a parliamentary committee meeting on Friday.

"To the best of my knowledge, the U.S. president would not put forward American proposals in the argument between us and the Syrians," Mr. Peres told Israel's army radio.

"I am convinced that the American president... will be

# Ciller pledges to help Palestinians

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller on Saturday pledged aid to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), on the first visit to the autonomous areas by a foreign head of government.

PNA head Yasser Arafat said Turkey was pledging \$50 million for Palestinian housing and infrastructure.

Coming from occupied Jerusalem where she met her Israeli counterpart Yitzhak Rabin, Ms. Ciller's visit to Gaza City was seen as a show of support for the Palestinian authority.

"The situation is a matter of priority," Ms. Ciller said of the problems facing Gaza and the Palestinians.

"It should be a priority for the whole world," she said, singling out a housing shortage in the areas.

"We think we can help... this is a contribution from Turkey to our brothers and sisters in Palestine," she told reporters in a briefing after her two-hour meeting with Mr. Arafat.

Earlier the Turkish premier visited Jerusalem's Old City and Al Aqsa mosque. Wearing a head scarf in

line with Muslim tradition, Ms. Ciller said noon prayers at Al Aqsa.

Outside the mosque, she met with mothers of Palestinian security detainees who demanded that Ms. Ciller pressure Israel to release the men.

Ms. Ciller also talked with a leading cleric, Ikrama Sabri.

"Her visit means to us that the Muslims are one family," Sheikh Sabri told the Associated Press. "She respects Islamic principles, when she came to the mosque, she covered her head."

Sheikh Sabri said he outlined to Ms. Ciller the Palestinian demands to run the Muslim holy sites in Arab East Jerusalem.

"Your visit today was a very important visit," Mr. Arafat told Ms. Ciller in Gaza. "You have kept your promise and came to visit us here in the first Palestinian lands liberated after the (Israeli) occupation."

Turkey has expressed interest in sending forces to an international team to monitor

# Charles wraps up Los Angeles visit

LOS ANGELES (R) — Britain's Prince Charles wrapped up his five-day visit to Los Angeles, which has taken him from riot-torn areas of the city to the glitz of Hollywood, with a speech to local business leaders Friday.

Prince Charles then left for a visit to the British colony of Hong Kong, which will be turned over to mainland China in 1997. During his stay in Los Angeles, the prince toured the south central section of the city, which was devastated by the 1992 race riots in which 56 people died and property damage was estimated at \$1 billion, as well as other areas hard-hit by the unrest. He also saw at first hand the damage inflicted by the unrest on other areas of Los Angeles, Charles, who was invited to Los Angeles by then-mayor Tom Bradley shortly after the riots, had specifically asked to see how communities were rebuilding, both physically and morally. He spent two days of his visit in schools, training centres and community projects. But the prince also made time for Hollywood's elite, attending the premiere of the film, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, and attending a star-studded bash at the home of television mogul Aaron Spelling. He also had a private meeting with entertainer Barbra Streisand, who the starstruck heir to the British throne once called "my only pinup," as well as paying an unscheduled visit to former President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, at their Bel-air mansion.

# Belgian cardinal: Divorcees can have communion

BRUSSELS (R) — A Belgian cardinal said Friday priests did not have the right to refuse holy communion to divorcees who do not abstain from sex, defying a ban by the Pope last month. Cardinal Godfried Danneels, who is part of the college which can elect a pope, told reporters the issue of giving communion to divorcees would be discussed by Belgian bishops at their monthly conference next Tuesday. "A priest does not have the right to refuse communion to divorced people... one should not stigmatise people," the cardinal was quoted by Belga News Agency as saying. A spokesman for the cardinal confirmed his comments and said it was not up to a priest to make a judgment on someone who wanted communion. Card. Danneels' public stand followed an announcement by two leading bishops in northern Belgium last month they would defy the communion ban. On Oct. 14, the Vatican said in a letter to the world's bishops that Catholics who divorce and remarry cannot receive communion unless they abstain from sex.

# Fergie offered role on U.S. TV — papers

LONDON (R) — The Duchess of York, estranged wife of Queen Elizabeth's second son Prince Andrew, has been offered a role in a celebrity episode of the popular U.S. television series Baywatch, British newspapers reported Saturday. "A script has been prepared for her, and she has already had talks with the show's hunky male lead and director David Hasselhoff," the Daily Star, a popular tabloid, said. British entrepreneur Richard Branson is expected to appear in the same episode of the lifeguard show which is due to be screened next year. The show is broadcast in about 50 countries. "I have had detailed discussions by phone. I am expecting a call from her," the Daily Mirror quoted Hasselhoff as saying. The flame-haired duchess, popularly known as "Fergie," married Prince Andrew in 1986 and the couple separated in 1992. They have two young daughters. The Daily Mail, another tabloid, said Hasselhoff met the duchess and Branson when a trip on Branson's Virgin Atlantic Airline to the Baywatch set was auctioned on behalf of one of the duchess' favourite charities. Meanwhile, the Duchess of York's former butler Friday promised the high court he would not reveal confidential details gleaned while he worked for her.

Lower Majali refut

By Aymen Al Safadi

AMMAN (R) — Lower Majali, a small town in the south of Jordan, has been the scene of a bitter dispute between the local population and the Jordanian government over the use of the town's water resources.

The dispute has been ongoing for several years, with the local population claiming that the government is using the water for its own purposes, leaving the town with a severe water shortage.

The government, on the other hand, claims that the water is being used for agricultural purposes, which is a vital part of the local economy.

The dispute has led to a series of protests and demonstrations by the local population, who are demanding that the government stop using the water for its own purposes and allow them to use it for their own needs.

The government has responded by sending in troops to maintain order, but the protests have continued.

The dispute has also led to a series of legal battles in the Jordanian courts, but no final decision has been reached yet.

The situation in Lower Majali is a microcosm of the larger problem of water scarcity in Jordan, which is a country with very little natural water resources.

The Jordanian government is facing a difficult task of managing the country's water resources in a way that is fair and sustainable for all its citizens.

Majali relations

Riyadh accep

AMMAN (R) — Saudi Arabia has accepted the Jordanian proposal for a meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers to discuss the issue of water resources in the Jordanian town of Lower Majali.

The meeting is expected to take place in Riyadh in the coming weeks, and it is hoped that it will lead to a resolution of the dispute over the town's water resources.

The Jordanian government has been seeking a peaceful resolution to the dispute for some time, and the Saudi Arabian proposal is seen as a positive step towards that goal.

The meeting will also provide an opportunity for the two countries to discuss other issues of mutual interest, such as trade and security.

The Jordanian government is optimistic that the meeting will lead to a resolution of the dispute, and it is hopeful that the situation in Lower Majali will improve as a result.